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NSC BRIEFING

6 April 1954

POLITICAL MOTIVATION FOR FRENCH REQUEST FOR
NAVAL AIR SUPPORT

I. New phase in French position on inter-
vention

A. Charge of Chinese intervention not
made by French before 4 April request
though obviously known for months.

B. Dien Bien Phu has apparently con-
vinced French drastic steps necessary
to ensure Geneva position.

1. French now recognize permanent
loss of privileged position in
Indochina.

2. Alternatives if Geneva fails:

a. A Dunkirk -- militarily
infeasible

b. Negotiations with a
strong US

c. US intervention -- slow

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and uncertain.

d. American intervention

3. Dien Bien Phu and imminence

of Geneva counterbalance fear of
provoking Chinese attacks.

II. If US rejects request:

A. France would be freer at Geneva
to make concessions -- EDC as well as
Indochina

B. France could better press for US
concessions at Geneva.

III. If US is involved militarily:

A. US position then same as on Korean
truce talks.

B. French public more amenable to war.

C. France could turn operation over
to US if conference failed.

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